

TIMBER DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

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urricane Ivan blew into the Alabama coast early on September 16, 2004, with sustained winds of over 130 mph, causing extreme wind and water damage throughout the southwest counties. High winds and rains continued to sweep across the state for the next 24 hours, causing tremendous timber damage.

Immediately following the storm and in addition to moving in personnel to clear roads, the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) began an aerial survey, mapping, and damage assessment of the commercial forestland damaged by

the hurricane. While there was scattered timber damage throughout the state, twelve southwest Alabama counties directly impacted by the storm were identified for a more detailed assessment. These twelve counties included: Baldwin, Butler, Clarke, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Escambia, Geneva, Mobile, Monroe, and Wilcox.

On Monday, September 20, the Commission began surveying merchantable forestland in the assessment area using five airplanes with two observers per plane. Only merchantable forests with moderate to significant timber damage were recorded. Observers recorded the location, level of damage, and type of damaged timber. This process took approximately two weeks to complete.

Assessments were then entered into the AFC's computerized Geographic Information Mapping System (GIS) to determine acreage lost. Timber volumes were calculated based on average volumes per acre for pulpwood and sawtimber-sized stands by county, species, and product classification using Forest

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Inventory Analysis Data (FIA 2000). Timber values were determined using First Quarter 2004 Timber Mart South prices for South Alabama.

These twelve counties contain approximately 2,728,800 acres of merchantable forestland. Approximately 300,000 acres were moderately-to-severely damaged (greater than 20% damage), which incurred a potential estimated loss of

\$473,277,304 if not harvested. In addition, the AFC estimated 9,073,600 acres of merchantable forestland in 55 disaster-declared counties (outside the 12-county immediate impact area) that incurred damage amounting to \$136,950,609.

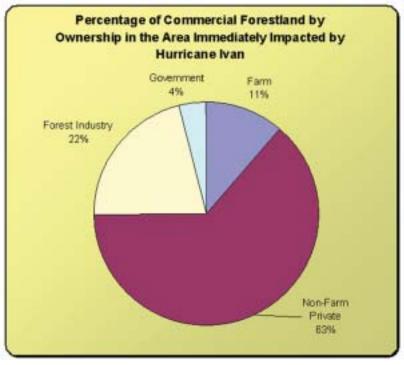
The total timber damage in Alabama caused by Hurricane Ivan is estimated to be \$610,227,913.

These values may not reflect the fair market value of this timber as measured by a certified appraiser. These values do not reflect the loss in time of future harvests or the cost of reforestation. These values do not reflect the increased harvesting costs or subsequent losses that may be incurred by landowners, due to such things as wildfire, insects (especially southern pine beetle), or disease.

To put the damaged timber value in perspective, the stumpage value of wood harvested and processed in the twelve-county assessment area during 2003 was approximately \$193,715,000. The AFC estimates that damaged timber from Hurricane Ivan is 2.44 times more than what was harvested last year in the assessment area.

Detailed maps of damaged areas are free and readily available for landowners and loggers to use in the harvest operation. Call the Alabama Forestry Commission office in the county where your land is located or contact the AFC online at hurricanehelp@forestry.state.al.us.





Kevin Taylor, Cherokee County Manager and member of one of the Alabama Forestry Commission emergency relief crews, working to clear roads and remove fallen trees from buildings following Hurricane Ivan.

Southwest Alabama Counties Most Severely Effected by Hurricane Ivan

